

RIDGE, MD - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today announced over \$1 million in federal funds for the maintenance of St. Jerome Creek.

The federal navigation channel at St. Jerome Creek restricts the ability of local recreational boaters, watermen, charter boat operators, and others to exit and enter the waterways during periods of low tide. "I was pleased to work with Senator Sarbanes to secure funding for this important project," Hoyer said. "Dredging will benefit the many residents near the Creek who depend on access to the Chesapeake Bay for income, including watermen and charter boat operators."

The House and Senate agreed to provide \$200,000 to study the feasibility of constructing up to two jetties, as well as \$850,000 to dredge 4900 feet of the creek. The construction of jetties will free up these critical pathways and reduce the dredging need from a two year cycle to a ten year cycle.

"For the past fourteen years—since the last time it was dredged—the mouth of the creek has filled to the point where large boats cannot get in or out during low tide without scraping bottom," Hoyer said. "Clearly this has had a significant impact on those whose livelihoods depend on the water, not to mention recreational boaters, all of whom have seen the window of time to enter and exit the creek get smaller and trickier."

St. Jerome Creek provides the only safe harbor between Point Lookout and the Patuxent River for boats on the Chesapeake Bay seeking shelter from rapidly approaching storms. In 2004, at the request of Congressman Hoyer, the Army Corps of Engineers agreed to expedite the dredging of St. Jerome Creek.

"This funding will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to complete the project, resulting in improved safety, navigability, and expanded access to boaters," Hoyer said.

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